

# Woodbury City Update

March 2020 • Volume 21, No. 3



Painting by Polly Blom.

## Local artists can highlight their artwork in the community

The Woodbury Parks and Recreation Department is now accepting applications to display monthly art exhibitions in the lobby at City Hall and Central Park.

Only artwork that meets general community standards will be exhibited. The City of Woodbury community standard will be “family-friendly” works.

Once a submission is approved, an exhibition period will be confirmed with the artist. The displaying artist is responsible for hanging and dismantling his/her own display. The space available will accommodate approximately six to eight pieces, depending upon their size.

The display period will be the first weekday of the month until the last weekday of the month. The artist must provide any assistance that is needed for mounting the exhibit.

For monthly availability on displaying artwork, please call 651-714-3583 or email [reconline@woodburymn.gov](mailto:reconline@woodburymn.gov).

## Open Book meetings set for market value appeals



Woodbury property owners can attend any of the following Open Book meetings to appeal their market value or property classification.

- Thursday, April 2, from 5 to 7 p.m., Cottage Grove City Hall, 12800 Ravine Parkway South
- Wednesday, April 8, from 5 to 7 p.m., Oakdale City Hall, 1584 Hadley Avenue North

- Thursday, April 16, from 5 to 7 p.m., Woodbury City Hall, 8301 Valley Creek Road
- Wednesday, April 22, from 2 to 7 p.m., Washington County Government Center in Stillwater, 14949 62nd Street North

Property owners who have questions or concerns are strongly encouraged to contact the property appraiser responsible for their area as a first step. The number to call is 651-430-6175.

## Market value notices set to hit mailboxes in March

Property value notices are expected to be mailed to property owners during the last week of March by Washington County. Like in previous years, the valuation notices will be mailed with property tax statements for taxes payable in 2020.

The “2020 Notice of Valuation and Classification for Taxes Payable in 2021” will indicate the market value established this year on Jan. 2. This market value is the approximate amount for which a property could sell and is the basis for your 2021 taxes.

### Determining Market Value

Each year, the county assessor’s office reviews the assessed market value of all property to determine whether changes in the local real estate market require a change in assessed values. Real estate sales are verified and studied based on the location, age, and style of home and quality of construction to determine these market adjustments.

If property owners question their 2020 estimated market value or classification listed on their “Notice of Valuation” form, they should:

### 1. Contact the assessor’s office.

Property owners who have questions or concerns regarding the market value set for their property are encouraged to contact the property appraiser assigned to their area by calling 651-430-6175. The appraiser will review the property data and sales information with you and, if necessary, schedule an interior review of the property. A large majority of concerns can be resolved through this administrative review without the need for a formal appeal.

**OR** you may attend any of the four regional Open Book meetings sched-

uled by the county (see 2020 schedule in adjacent box). Your appeal can be made in person, through a letter, or through a representative authorized by you. The Open Book process offers an informal setting for property owners as well as several scheduling options.

### 2. Appear before the County Board of Appeal and Equalization.

Property owners who are not satisfied by speaking with the assessor’s office or with the action taken at the Open Book meeting may appear before the County Board of Appeal, consisting of elected county commissioners, the county auditor, and/or appointed officials. You must contact the assessor’s office at 651-430-6175 by Wednesday, May 6, to be placed on the agenda.

### 3. Appeal to Minnesota State Tax Court.

The alternative method of appeal is bypassing the first two steps listed above. It involves making an appeal directly to the Minnesota Tax Court. The deadline to appeal to the Minnesota State Tax Court is April 30 of the year that the taxes are due. That means if a property owner wishes to appeal taxes due in 2020, they must file an appeal with the court by April 30, 2020. For more information, visit the tax court website at [mn.gov/tax-court](http://mn.gov/tax-court) or call 651-539-3260.

If you have any questions regarding the appraisal process or the 2020 market value, contact the Washington County Assessor’s Office at 651-430-6175 or visit the Washington County Assessor’s Office website at [washington.minnesotaassessors.com](http://washington.minnesotaassessors.com).

# Council Perspective

By Mayor Anne Burt

## Seventh Woodbury well has PFAS levels above water quality limits

On Feb. 3, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) called the city and explained they would be issuing a health risk advisory for levels of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in a seventh Woodbury municipal water production well. The well was immediately removed from operation.

However, during the question and answer session following my State of the City presentation Feb. 20, I mistakenly said we had not yet taken the seventh well out of service. I want to clarify that we immediately removed the well from service Feb. 3, even though we did not receive the official health risk advisory notification until Feb. 21.

Of Woodbury's 19 municipal wells, water from seven wells now have detectable levels of PFAS that exceed one or more thresholds established by the MDH. The drinking water from Woodbury's remaining wells continues to meet State of Minnesota and federal PFAS standards and guidelines.

The MDH does all sampling on Woodbury municipal wells for PFAS. Health advisories are issued based on four consecutive quarters of a maximum concentration level (MCL) or unregulated contaminant guidance value exceedance or at any point a running average of four quarters is over a MCL or unregulated contaminant guidance value. The most recent test results of detected PFAS ranges in Woodbury wells are available at [woodburymn.gov/pfas](http://woodburymn.gov/pfas).

There are a number of theories about why the levels of PFAS in the seventh well increased above water quality limits. PFAS contamination moves and varies in detectable levels in the aquifers due to a variety of factors. While the identified sources of PFAS in the groundwater aquifers (former disposal sites) have been, and continue to be, actively remediated and managed, PFAS contamination remains in the environment.

As you can imagine, it can be difficult to identify movement of water and PFAS in and through varying geology 500 feet below ground. It is also difficult to predict these movements, so there is no guarantee that the 12 wells that remain in service will not one day experience increased levels of PFAS above water quality. We have no reason to believe today that any new health advisories on the remaining 12 wells in service are imminent. The city and MDH will continue to actively monitor the detectable levels of PFAS in its source water and keep the public informed.

### Temporary water treatment facility update

In January, the Woodbury City Council voted to expedite the construction of a temporary water treatment facility north of Valley Creek Road and east of Tower Drive. The original design of the temporary facility was to address three of the city's six wells that were removed from service at that time due to health advisories from PFAS levels. The city is now exploring whether additional treatment capacity will be needed.

Site grading for the temporary water treatment facility is underway and we are one step closer to bringing a few of the impacted wells back into service. It is critical the city implement temporary treatment options as soon as possible to allow the city to meet water demand on peak use days this summer. If we have to implement water restrictions, you can be the first to know by signing up to receive CodeRED emergency notifications to your mobile device via call and/or a text message (see article on page 3).

The temporary water treatment facility is expected to be needed until a long-term solution is implemented, estimated to be no sooner than 2025. The State of Minnesota released its preliminary plan for the long-term solutions held during listening sessions with the public in late February and early March. You can view one of these sessions online at [youtube.com/cityofwoodburymn](http://youtube.com/cityofwoodburymn).

I assure you we are working to address the water situation. We took action to implement temporary treatment as soon as we could. This work requires collaborating with three state agencies – two of which control the funding source – and a considerable amount of time to negotiate appropriate solutions and funding. We could not afford to construct a temporary water treatment facility without the support of the state and we were unable to obtain access to state funding until January, three months after we took our sixth well out of service.

We have worked hard on the water quality issue for many years (see timeline below), particularly since 2017. It has taken hundreds of hours of staff and consultant time to get us to where we are today – on the doorsteps of implementing a temporary treatment solution. I am proud of the progress we have made, particularly since last October.

I understand there are questions about why some of our neighboring communities have already secured funding and implemented treatment projects. These communities received immediate state support because detected PFAS levels were higher in these areas; PFAS was found in a higher percentage of wells in the other communities; and the presence of PFAS impacted the other communities' systems and operations more based on their system design.

### About PFAS

PFAS were made and used by several companies around the world in household and industrial products such as stain repellents, lubricants, fire retardant and suppressants, and more. The 3M Company made PFAS at its Cottage Grove facility from the late 1940s until 2002. PFAS wastes were disposed of at several sites in Washington County. The source of the PFAS in our groundwater has been identified as these disposal sites and the manufacturing facility in Cottage Grove.

More information is available on the city's website at [woodburymn.gov/pfas](http://woodburymn.gov/pfas).

## Timeline of PFAS-related activities in Woodbury since 2005

**2005** The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) begins testing Woodbury's wells for PFAS after low levels of PFAS were detected in private wells in western Lake Elmo. Monitoring of Woodbury groundwater production wells continues today.

**2007** PFAS detected at low levels in Woodbury wells. MDH

establishes a health risk level for some specific PFAS. Woodbury's wells test below the health risk levels.

**2007** The State of Minnesota and 3M reach a settlement agreement that provides the state \$40 million for temporary water treatment projects relating to PFAS in the east metro.

**2009-11** The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and 3M complete additional remediation activities at the disposal sites. Long-term site groundwater management and remediation continues to limit remaining contamination to the sites.

**2012** Due to advancements in detection technology, trace

levels of other PFAS are found in Woodbury wells. However, the concentrations detected remain below the health risk limits established by MDH.

**2016** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reduced its drinking water protective guidance level for some PFAS to 70 parts per trillion. EPA studies indicate

# Be sure to sign up to receive emergency calls from the city



Does your family rely exclusively on mobile phone service instead of a landline telephone? If so – and if you want to receive important emergency messages from the city – you should sign up to receive emergency calls on your mobile phone.

The City of Woodbury, in conjunction with Washington County, uses CodeRED, a high-speed telephone calling system, to notify local residents and businesses about emergency situations. The system allows the city to send critical communications to the entire city or to targeted areas within the city in a matter of minutes.

“It’s important that residents take the time to sign up to receive emergency notifications on their mobile devices as this will be the fastest way to reach you in the event of an emergency,” explained Mayor Anne Burt. “For example, if we have to implement increased water restrictions this summer, we will likely use CodeRED as one of the tools to notify residents.”

The system also can be used to send important “non-emergency” messages – like the reminder the city sent in August to residents living along the Woodbury Days parade route.

The non-emergency messages are optional; residents can opt out of receiving them. However, in most instances, the system is used in emergency situations where rapid and accurate information to residents are essential for life safety.

The system is not used for weather warnings, but may be used for follow-up information such as evacuations or shelter locations.

Fifteen CodeRED messages were sent to Woodbury residents in 2019.

If you reside or own property, including a business, within Woodbury, you are urged to sign up for CodeRED messages and ensure that you receive any emergency notifications.

You also can opt in to receive calls directly to your mobile phone, text messages, and/or email alerts. You can register as many devices as you wish to up to two addresses.

The CodeRED system uses the most recent information entered for an address and overwrites previous information associated with an address. It also automatically purges phone numbers that are no longer in use. In addition, a free CodeRED app is available for many smartphones. You can

use it to view alerts issued in different CodeRED service areas.

## How to register

To ensure emergency notices reach residents and utility users, accurate and up-to-date information is essential. To add or change a number, including mobile phones, or to opt for a text message and/or email alert, you should self-register by visiting the city’s website at [woodburymn.gov/codered](http://woodburymn.gov/codered) or texting keyword “WashingtonMN” to 99411. You may register as many mobile phone numbers and email addresses as you desire.

Persons without internet service can call Woodbury Public Safety at 651-714-3600 between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. for assistance with registration.

If you have any questions about the CodeRED system, contact the Woodbury Public Safety Department at 651-714-3600 or [police@woodburymn.gov](mailto:police@woodburymn.gov).

## How it works

City or county staff accesses CodeRED via a secure portal on the internet. A “call area” is marked, identifying street addresses. Telephone numbers are

matched up electronically to these addresses through the use of geographical information systems. A pre-recorded message is sent via the telephone with information about the incident and possibly instructions for action to be taken. The message is played when answered by a live person or an answering machine; the system makes three attempts to connect to each number.

The calling number for CodeRED emergencies will display as 800-419-5000 or “Emergency Comm” and the number for general notifications is 855-969-4636 or “General Comm.” If you would like to hear the last message delivered to your phone, simply dial the number back. Users also may add these numbers as a “contact” in their phones, so they recognize the call is coming from the CodeRED system.

CodeRED is just one tool the city uses to share information with the public. Depending on the event, updates may also be available via the city’s website, *City Update* newsletter, InTouch email service, the city’s social media accounts, government access cable TV channels and local media.

exposure to certain PFAS at high levels may result in an increased risk of adverse health effects.

**2016 Late 2016 – MDH** announced it was reviewing studies and methods used by the EPA to determine whether its own health risk levels need to be lowered and, if so, what the values should be.

**2017 May –** the MDH completed its review and updated its protective guidance level for some PFAS. The new risk levels, based on daily consumption over a lifetime, were reduced further from the EPA 70 parts per trillion guidance. MDH scientists updated the values to better reflect new state-level analysis of the potential for mothers to pass along the chemicals to fetuses and nursing infants.

**2017** MDH issues health risk advisories on five of city’s 19 wells with PFAS levels above water quality standards and guidelines. The city makes operational changes, significantly reducing the use of these five wells.

**2018 February –** the State of Minnesota and 3M reach a settlement agreement and the state receives a grant from 3M for \$850 million. After legal fees, approximately \$700 million remains for assisting east metro communities in cleaning up its water supply.

**2018** The State of Minnesota begins to study long-term water treatment options in the east metro that will be funded through the \$700 million settlement grant. A preliminary report is expected to be shared

with communities in the first quarter of 2020.

**2019 April –** The MDH lowers health-based advisory value for PFOS again from 27 parts per trillion, set two years ago, to 15 parts per trillion and sets a guidance value for PFHxS.

**October –** The MDH issues a health risk advisory on a sixth Woodbury well. All six Woodbury wells with health risk advisories are taken out of service.

**December –** City of Woodbury receives approval to begin design on a temporary treatment facility to treat three of the current six wells out of service for PFAS impacts.

**2019 January –** The Woodbury City Council declares a local emergency to expedite the construction of a temporary water treatment facility to treat three of the six wells with health advisories. Project funding is coming from the 2007 Consent Decree agreement between the State of Minnesota and 3M. City begins work with its consultants to design the treatment facility.

**February –** The MDH issues a health risk advisory on a seventh Woodbury well due to PFAS levels. The well is immediately taken out of service.

Site grading begins on the new temporary water treatment facility to be located north of Valley Creek Road and east of Tower Drive.



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## Registration for summer recreation programs begins March 18

The summer recreation brochure is on its way! You'll find tons of new and classic programs and community events designed to build friendships, boost creativity, learn new skills and bring friends and neighbors together.

From spontaneous pop-up events, summer camps, art and music classes, to the Fourth of July Hometown Celebration, there are plenty of ways for people of all ages to stay busy this summer. Details will be available in the city's summer recreation programs brochure to be mailed the week of March 9.

Online registration for summer recreation programs begins March 18.

Postal Patron  
Woodbury, MN

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## Visit the city's booth at Community EXPO April 4

Mark your calendar for Saturday, April 4, and plan to attend the 11th annual Woodbury Community EXPO. The event, sponsored by the Woodbury Area Chamber of Commerce, will be held at East Ridge High School from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The expo is free and family-friendly.

More than 130 local businesses and non-profit groups will participate, promoting their companies and organizations. There also will be entertainment and demonstrations throughout the day.

Be sure to stop by the city's booth to:

- Learn about city facilities, services, seasonal employment, recreation programs, development projects, water quality, water efficiency opportunities, and car seat safety;



- Pick up a free parks and trails map and other resources; and
- Enjoy a fun, interactive activity for kids.

Outside, the whole family can check out some of the city's big trucks (weather permitting).

For more information about the expo, call the Woodbury Area Chamber of Commerce at 651-578-0722 or visit [woodburychamber.org](http://woodburychamber.org).

## Park building and shelter rentals now available for 2020

Spring gatherings and summer celebrations are around the corner, and the City of Woodbury offers many different locations for groups of all sizes. Reserve an outdoor park shelter or building for 2020 now!

Reserving a facility online is easy. Visit [woodburymn.gov/parkrentals](http://woodburymn.gov/parkrentals). Short descriptions with photos of each facility are listed in the reservation system. Amenities differ based on the facility, but popular features include grills, picnic tables, a fishing pier, canoe launch, restrooms and access to play structures.

To reserve an outdoor athletic field or court, call the Parks and Recreation Department at 651-714-3583 during regular business hours, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

### Special events

Special events such as sports competitions, festivals, races or fundraisers require an application. The application can be found at [woodburymn.gov/parkrentals](http://woodburymn.gov/parkrentals) under "Outdoor Event Use Guidelines and Application."



*The new Ojibway Park Building is one of the Woodbury park buildings available for rent. For a full list of rentals, visit [woodburymn.gov/parkrentals](http://woodburymn.gov/parkrentals).*